

Tilley leaves behind legacy of taking care of Soldiers

By Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

If Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley looked back over his 35-year career, he would surely notice he's seen more than a few wars, quite a few duty stations, more TDYs and deployments than he can count and thousands of Soldiers whose lives he's touched.

Tilley may be the highest-ranking enlisted Soldier in the Army, but he still sees himself as just a Soldier trying to do his job the best he can. "I'm the senior enlisted guy for 1.3 million enlisted Soldiers. I routinely testify before Congress, affecting Soldiers and family members in the U.S. Army – that includes active, Guard and Reserve," Tilley explains with a shrug, as if it's no big deal. He doesn't even mention that he's also the Army Chief of Staff's right-hand man.

"I had a different expectation of what the SMA's job is," Tilley explained. "I've been a sergeant major forever. I thought this was just another step in the Army. I'll understand all the things that are going on. No, no, no, no. I've seen more of the Army now than I ever thought I would. I now understand what [the Office of the Secretary of Defense] and Congress do."

In his Pentagon office, Tilley doesn't sit behind his highly polished wooden desk. He prefers to sit with his guests around a small table. Dressed in Class Bs and noshing on Red Vines, Tilley's youthful demeanor belies his status as the elder statesman of the NCO Corps. It's one of the few times



he appears to sit still for any length of time.

During his three-and-a-half-year tenure, Tilley has traveled more than 700,000 miles. At nearly every stop, he seems to be refueled from an endless supply of energy. Speaking to Soldiers, he constantly paces, working the whole audience, seemingly giving each Soldier his personal attention. He easily warms up any group – joking, sharing anecdotes and heartfelt stories about his wife. He captivates as he tells them the latest news concerning the “Top Five” — pay, healthcare, housing, quality of life and operations tempo. During the same talk, Tilley imparts to the Soldiers the hard truth that we are a country at war. It’s a statement he punctuates with statistics, the number of Soldiers who have been killed or wounded in the Global War on Terror. He doesn’t read them from a card; they are numbers he doesn’t allow himself to forget.

He can transform an audience – one moment, they are shouting “Hooah”; the next they are somber, mourning lost comrades; and yet a third, they are standing tall infused with the pride Tilley seems to be able to so easily instill in Soldiers.

“I like people. I like to see people smiling and laughing, having fun and joking; and I like doing a hard day’s work for what we’re going to get paid,” Tilley said. “I really like it when I get around a group of Soldiers and they laugh and I laugh. That’s a big deal.

“When I talk to Soldiers, I like to make it an enjoyable event,” he explained. “Laugh a little bit; joke a little bit; and then ask them what bothers them. One of the things that’s important for the Sergeant Major of the Army is to really feel the pulse of the Army – what’s going on and what concerns people. Then, try the best you can to answer questions as you go.”



Photos courtesy of the Office of the Sgt. Maj. of the Army

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley always loved spending time with Soldiers, be it one-arm push-ups, playing cards or foosball.



Tilley began his career in 1966, enlisting as an armored cavalryman from his hometown in Vancouver, Wash. He fought in Vietnam and had already been promoted to command sergeant major before many of today's young Soldiers were out of grade school. Even so, the 55-year-old veteran still has a strong connection with junior Soldiers.

"A lot of Soldiers look at [senior NCOs] and think, 'You don't remember what it's like to be a [private first class] or a specialist,'" Tilley said. "I'd like to differ with them. I'll never forget what it's like to be a Pfc. or a specialist, because it's hard. It's different conditions now, but it's still hard."

Tilley said he never thought about becoming the Sergeant Major of the Army. In fact, he jokes that his long-range goal was to make "Spec. 4." Tilley emphasized that he's just a Soldier. He was never honor graduate from an Army school and – with the exception of once – he was always promoted in the primary zone. "I'm just a Soldier that tried to do the best I could to get through life," he said.

Tilley attributes his success as a Soldier to being honest, straightforward and thinking positively. "I don't have all the right answers, but I'm smart enough to realize that other people



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley enlisted in 1971 as an armored cavalryman.

have good answers and I listen to them." Tilley readily admits that success is a group effort. "Nobody is successful by themselves," he said. Tilley attributes his successes as the Sergeant Major of the Army to the strong support of his wife, Gloria, and the six NCOs on his staff.

"The bottom line for a Soldier is at some time in your Army life you may have to take the life of another. That's the bottom line: to protect and defend the United States Constitution,"

Tilley explained. "Taking care of each other means enforcing standards and making sure people are ready to go and do the things they need to do. Don't talk about taking care of Soldiers. Take care of them."

"This is a tough time for the Army. We need to all pull together and take care of each other," he said. Tilley believes that Soldiers can be successful by just doing their jobs. Part of that job is taking care of families and each other.

As Tilley prepares for retirement he is looking forward to moving into his new home in Florida located near a golf course and his granddaughters. He's writing a book on Army development and leadership and contemplating starting his own business. Yet, he is still focused on taking care of Soldiers,



Tilley enjoyed taking time to pose for photos with Soldiers wherever he visited.

encouraging them to speak out by voting and joining private organizations that support and lobby for Soldiers and veterans.

Tilley has certainly left his mark on the Army. His legacy directly relates to his Top Five. “I just want people to know that I tried as hard as I could. It’s not about what you take with you, it’s what you leave behind.”

During his tour as SMA, Soldiers have received more than 20 percent in pay raises. For the first time in Army history, a sergeant major earns more than a captain. He’s advocated improving quality of life and educating Soldiers and family members about TRICARE. He also supported educating Soldiers about their retirement benefits and financial planning during NCO Education System (NCOES) courses. Tilley established the Department of the Army-level Soldier and NCO of the Year competition and gave his full support to revamping the *NCO Journal*.

Even with all this, Tilley is still greatly concerned about the Army’s high operations tempo and its impact on families, safety and NCOES.

“You look at 330,000 Soldiers forward deployed at 120 different locations and 150,000 Reserve Soldiers that have been activated. There’s a tremendous amount of stress that’s placed on Soldiers and family members [today],” Tilley

explained. “Even something as small as taking a 30-day leave has been very tough to pull off. Soldiers coming back from the [deployments] are only getting two-weeks leave.

“I think right now that the United States Army is the workhorse of our nation. Everybody ought to be very proud to serve in the United States Army and to be an American. You ought to stand up straight and be proud of who you are.”

Even now, as Tilley hangs up his uniform for the last time, concluding 35 years of distinguished service, Tilley admits that the Army will always be a part of his life. But as he prepares to step into another phase of his life, he’s still up for a rousing game of ping pong or challenging a Soldier to one-armed push-ups. He still gets excited when he talks about Soldiers and even more so when he interacts with them.

“One of the biggest compliments I’ve gotten was when a specialist at a [Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers] conference stood up and said, ‘Sergeant Major, I just want to thank you for what you’ve done.’ That’s a big deal,” Tilley explained. “That means you’ve gotten down to the level in the Army that’s really hard to get to.”

And young Soldiers the Army over now know what the Sergeant Major of the Army does – thanks to Tilley.



Wanted: Self-motivated NCOs to build the Army's next generation

By Sgt. Jimmy Norris

While the U.S. Army is composed entirely of volunteers, the Army is hoping more NCOs will step up to the challenge of recruiting and volunteer to help build its next generation.

Given the extra hours, life away from Army facilities such as military hospitals and post exchanges and the pressures of meeting a regular monthly mission, Recruiting may be an unappealing prospect to many NCOs.

In fact, this year only 35 percent of the Army's Recruiters volunteered for the duty. The rest were detailed by the career branches to spend three years helping the Army meet its manpower needs.

"It's most definitely a challenging and stressful job," said Sgt. 1st Class Keith Mills, Recruiting Special Missions NCOIC, U.S. Army Recruiting Command. "But the opportunities and benefits will enhance your military career and also prepare you for the civilian sector."

Recruiters receive \$450 a month Special Duty Pay, \$75 a month expense allowance and their choice of assignments when Recruiting duty is over. In addition, Recruiters receive – free of charge – the Army Blue uniform.

Recruiters also enjoy a little more stability than other Soldiers.

"People coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan who want some stability should give Recruiting a try," Recruiter of the Year Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Downs said. "For the past three years I've spent every night sleeping in my bed with my wife."

According to Mills, Soldiers stay at the same duty station the entire three years they're assigned as Recruiters. Those who choose to reclassify and make Recruiting a career do not stay at the same duty station for the rest of their careers, he said, but it is possible for them to stay with the same battalion.

There are also incentives for success. Recruiters work on a point system, receiving an average of 20 points for each successful enlistment, and an additional 20 points when their recruits graduate from basic



Photo by Master Sgt. Rudy Carter, Fort Jackson, S.C., Public Affairs NCOIC



U.S. Army Photo
Above: Staff Sgt. John Kirby takes down information from 21-year-old applicant William Coburn. Left: A Recruiter talks with a potential recruit about possible career paths.

training. After earning 1,200 points, Recruiters receive a gold Recruiter badge. Once they earn another 1,200 points, they earn the Recruiter ring. Recruiters who earn their rings within 36 months receive meritorious promotions. When they earn another 2,400 points, for a total of 4,800, Recruiters receive the Glen E. Morrell Award, a medallion that marks the pinnacle of Recruiting achievement.

Even if Recruiters don't earn their rings, Recruiting still helps NCOs become more competitive with their peers for promotions. According to Mills, 74.5 percent of Recruiters in the primary zone for promotion to sergeant first class during the 2002 promotion board were selected for promotion. The Army average was only 33.6 percent.

Recruiting also helps NCOs build skills and knowledge that will be valuable to them for years after they've left Recruiting.

"What job can better prepare you for the transition back to life as a civilian?" asked Downs, a former heavy engineer who volunteered for Recruiting duty and is now assigned in Jacksonville, Fla.

Downs who became a career Recruiter in September, said Recruiting also gives NCOs skills that directly relate to civilian jobs including counseling, sales and recruiting for civilian companies. "You're out there alone with [no military facilities] networking with police, mayors and school principals, doing all the networking most people wait until they're at 19 years and change to do."

"Basically what you're doing is finding quality employees for a major corporation," he said. "Who wouldn't want to hire someone with X number of years experience in human relations?"

The benefits to recruiting don't stop at material gains, said Staff Sgt. Michael Oganowski, a Field Artillery forward observer who was detailed into Recruiting duty and assigned to a Recruiting station in Manchester, Conn.

"I really enjoy helping people out. It's a good feeling when you put someone in the Army who really needs it," he said. "A lot of the people here are from lower income neighborhoods. They tell me there are fights going on and they hear gunshots every night and they really need to get out of here. There was one high school senior who had been abandoned at the age of 11. He was living in a shelter when I [enlisted] him in the Army. Even though he went into the Infantry and got deployed; he still thanks me."

Downs also describes Recruiting as a rewarding experience.

"The thing I like the most is when you take the rough draft of a person, the 17-to 21-year-old college dropout or high school graduate with the droopy pants and the hat turned sideways and no military discipline at all, and you [get them to enlist in the Army]. Then, when they come back home and you see the Soldier they've become," he said. "I can't tell you how many postcards and letters I get from parents saying 'Thanks for what you did for my son. He was going nowhere.' or 'He was sweeping floors at Wal-Mart. Now he's a combat engineer and he's going to college.'"

While there are many incentives for becoming a Recruiter, both Downs and Oganowski warn that it's not for everybody.



Photo by Master Sgt. Rudy Carter, Fort Jaskcon, S.C., Public Affairs NCOIC

Spc. James Buenaventura asks Sgt. Vinh Pham questions as they role play during class at the U.S. Army Recruiting and Retention School at Fort Jackson, S.C.

"It's tough because my children are asleep when I leave for work in the morning and they're asleep when I get home at night," said Oganowski. "It's also very stressful because you're constantly under pressure to accomplish the mission."

"If you're the kind of Soldier who accepts the minimum, don't come out here," added Downs, "You have to be self-motivated and self-disciplined."

Oganowski plans to return to Field Artillery in April.

Downs will tour various installations throughout the Army and give briefings to prospective volunteers as part of the Army's Recruit the Recruiter program. He offers a bit of sage advice which he said applies not only to Recruiting, but to retention, as well.

"How many people have sat on the line, being three people short in their squads and said, 'we need more Soldiers'?" Downs asked. "You can either quit complaining, or get out there and be part of the solution."

NCOs who are interested in Recruiting should visit the U.S. Army Recruiting Command Web site at <http://www.usarec.army.mil>, or call 1-800-223-3735, extension 6-1860/6-1028 for more information.

Photos by Spc. Bill Putnam, Army News Service



Soldiers, NCOs compete to see who's the Army's best

By Spc. Bill Putnam

A medic assigned to 25th Infantry Division (Light) and an Infantryman assigned to 3rd Infantry Division (Old Guard) have been named as the U.S. Army 2003 Soldier and NCO of the Year, respectively.

Soldier of the Year, Spc. Russell A. Burnham of 1st Brigade, 25th ID, Fort Lewis, Wash., and NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. James W. Luby of the Old Guard at Fort Myer, Va., were among 22 of the Army's best Soldiers who converged at Fort Lee and Arlington, Va., to compete for the honor of being named the Army's best NCO and Soldier of the Year.

The competition to select the Army's second Soldier and NCO of the Year began at Fort Lee with a tough three-day competition, Sept. 14-16.

The Soldiers and NCOs represented the Army's 11 major commands like U.S. Army Europe, Special Operations Command and U.S. Army Pacific.

The competition forced the Soldiers to strain, sweat and think their way to meeting the Army standard in events

ranging from an Army Physical Fitness Test to common task testing.

They competed against one another in seven events worth 50 points each. The events included weapons qualification, the Army Physical Fitness Test, land navigation, hands-on common task testing, a 50-question multiple-choice written exam, a written essay and a mystery event.

The mystery event turned out to be a timed six-mile road march in body armor, loading bearing vest, Kevlar helmet and 25-pound rucksack that the Soldiers had to complete in 90 minutes or less.

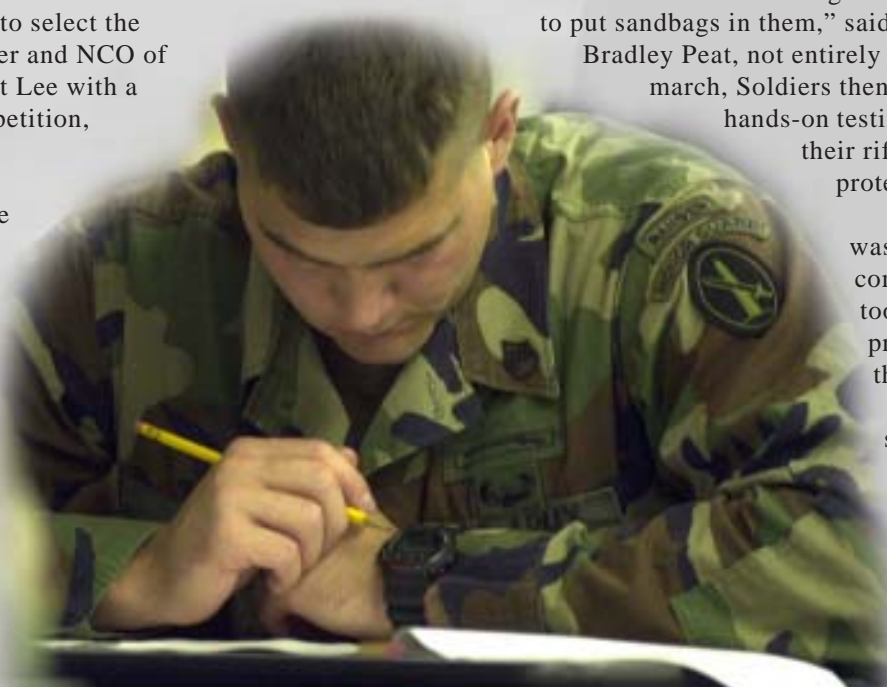
"If their rucks don't weigh that much, they're going to put sandbags in them," said Command Sgt. Maj.

Bradley Peat, not entirely joking. After the march, Soldiers then had to complete more hands-on testing and qualify with their rifles in their M-40 protective masks.

Obviously, preparation was the key for all of the competitors; all of whom took individual approaches to training for the competition.

"We started at square one. We took the [memorandum of instruction] and ran down each task," said Burnham, the 24-year-old Soldier.

Burnham's sponsor,



Sgt. Maj. Kerry Kolhof, assisted Burnham in preparing for the competition. Instead of just memorizing answers from manuals, Kolhof paired Burnham with subject matter experts who taught him the tasks.

"That way, he could answer the questions no matter how they were asked," Kolhof explained.

Luby chose a different approach. "My platoon sergeant and first sergeant allowed me to do my own thing and trusted me that I'd do it," said the 23-year-old NCO. "One of the biggest things is I have a lot of great NCOs I work around, and any time I had a problem, they'd help me out."

The competition picked back up when a board of command sergeants major convened by Sergeant Major of the Army Jack Tilley interviewed the contestants in Arlington, Va., Sept. 18. The winners were named during a Sept. 19 ceremony in Arlington.

Surprisingly, this is only the Army's second Soldier and NCO of the Year, said Tilley. The idea for the competition came to him when he was the 1st Armored Division command sergeant major from 1992-1997. When two 1st Armored Division Soldiers were named the U.S. Army Europe Soldier and NCO of the Year, Tilley asked the Army leadership what was next.

"And they said 'nothing,'" Tilley said. So Tilley wanted to organize something that would recognize excellence.

A few competitors asked why the Army even scheduled this event while the nation is at war.

That's easy, Tilley said. The Army needs to recognize excellence in the enlisted ranks, he said. And holding a competition this year shows the Army is continuing to do "normal things" while at war, he added.

Since part of the program is to transfer the winners to Washington, D.C., Burnham will move from



A competitor sashes through the wetlands on the Fort Lee, Va., land navigation course.

Fort Lewis to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Both Luby and Burnham received over \$17,000 in cash and prizes, including an all-expense paid trip to Walt Disney World, U.S. Savings Bonds and travelers checks.

"The best thing I got from this competition is I learned that senior NCOs are phenomenal, and they are the most professional people in the world," Burnham said.

"Before I entered the competition, all I could think of was becoming an officer. Now, after meeting all these great senior NCOs, I can see [myself becoming] a sergeant major."

(Editor's note: Spc. Bill Putnam is a staff writer for the Army News Service. Sgt. Chad Jones

contributed information to this article.)

Soldier and NCO of the Year 2003



Spc. Russell A. Burnham, FORSCOM

Burnham serves as an Evacuation Specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Infantry Bn., 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash. A native of Arizona, Burnham is married with two children and is currently attending Pierce College.

Burnham was selected as the 1st Brigade and 25th Infantry Division Soldier of the Year and I Corps & Fort Lewis Soldier of the Year.

Staff Sgt. James W. Luby, MDW & NCR

Luby serves as a squad leader in Co. E, 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), Fort Myer, Va. A native of Maryland, Luby is married with one child. He was selected as the Military District of Washington and National Capital Region NCO of the Year.



Staff Sgt. James M. Murphy, FORSCOM

Staff Sgt. Murphy serves as a Cavalry Fighting Vehicle Commander with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Knoxville, Tenn. A native of Tennessee, Murphy is married with two children and is currently enrolled in eArmyU. Murphy was selected as the First Army Soldier of the Year and as Regimental, State and First Army South NCO of the Year.



Spc. Brett F. Thurman, NCR

Spc. Thurman serves as a Training NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), Fort Myer, Va. Thurman has attended courses through Northern Virginia Community College. He was selected as the Military District of Washington and National Capital Region Soldier of the Year.



Staff Sgt. Michael D. Mosca, TRADOC

Staff Sgt. Mosca serves as a Training Operations NCO with Co. C, 705th Military Police Bn., Fort Leavenworth, Kan. A native of New York, he is married with one child and is currently enrolled at Kansas City Community College. Mosca was selected as the 705th MP Battalion NCO of the Year and Fort Leavenworth and Combined Arms Center NCO of the Year.



Spc. Claudia Sida, TRADOC

Spc. Sida serves as a Personnel Administrative Clerk at the NCO Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas. Sida is currently enrolled at El Paso Community College working on an associates degree in Criminal Justice. She previously completed a one-year program at the International Business College in El Paso. Sida was selected as the Fort Bliss and Training and Doctrine Command's Soldier of the Year.



Staff Sgt. Marcus A. McClain, USAREUR

Staff Sgt. McClain serves as a Platoon Sergeant with Co. C, 82nd Engineer Bn., 1st Infantry Division, Bamberg, Germany. A native of Indiana, he is married with two children. McClain was selected as the 1st Infantry Division NCO of the Year, U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army NCO of the Year and was inducted into the Sergeant Morales Club.



Sgt. Nicole J. Rejiester, USAREUR

Sgt. Rejiester serves as a Military Police Patrolman/Team Leader with the NATO Support Activity, 80th Area Support Group, Brussels, Belgium. Rejiester holds a bachelor of science degree in Criminology from Niagara University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Counseling. She was selected as U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army's Soldier of the Year.



Sgt. Shane E. Smith, AMC

Sgt. Smith serves as a Gunner with Battery B, 1st Bn., 194th Field Artillery, Selfridge, Mich. A native of Iowa, he was selected as the Headquarters, U.S. Army Materiel Command NCO of the Year and the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command NCO of the Year.





Sgt. Brandon M. Parrett, AMC

Sgt. Parrett serves as a Test, Measurement & Diagnostic Equipment Support Specialist with 95th Maintenance Company, 725th Main Support Bn., Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. A native of Indiana, Parrett is married and was selected as the U.S. Army Materiel Command Soldier of the Year, U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command Soldier of the Year.

Sgt. James J. Engel, 8th Army

Sgt. Engel serves as an Emergency Care Specialist with HSC, 168th Medical Bn., 18th Medical Command, Camp Walker, Taegu, South Korea. A native of Georgia, Engel is married with two children and is a nationally registered emergency medical technician. He was selected as the 8th Army NCO of the Year.



Pfc. Jesse J. Whaley, 8th Army

Pfc. Whaley serves as a Training Room Clerk/Fire Direction Specialist with Co. A, 1st Bn., 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, South Korea. A native of Oklahoma, Whaley was selected as 2nd ID Soldier of the Quarter, and the 8th Army Soldier of the Year.

Sgt. 1st Class Samuel D. Morris, MEDCOM

Sgt. 1st Class Morris serves as an Instructor/Writer with Co. G, 232nd Medical Bn., 32nd Medical Bde., Army Medical Department Center and School, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A native of Virginia, Morris is married with three children. He was selected as the Medical Command NCO of the Year.



Sgt. Ha Thu Tran, MEDCOM

Sgt. Tran serves as a Medical Laboratory Technician with the Fox Army Health Center, Redstone Arsenal, Ala. Born in Vietnam, Tran holds a bachelor of science degree in Biochemistry from the University of California-Riverside. She was selected as Redstone Arsenal, Fox Army Health Center and Southeast Regional Command Soldier of the Year.

Sgt. Matthew J. Neville, USARPAC

Sgt. Neville serves as a Senior Instrumentalist (Saxophone Player) with the 9th Army Band, Fort Wainwright, Alaska. A native of Wisconsin, Neville has been taking courses through the University of Alaska Anchorage, and was selected as U.S. Army Pacific's NCO of the Year.



Spc. Timothy J. Norris, USARPAC

Spc. Norris serves as a Training Assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Det., 58th Signal Bn., Okinawa, Japan. A native of California, Norris is married with two children. He is taking college courses through the University of Maryland and was selected as U.S. Army Pacific's Soldier of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Steven W. Cato, SMDC

Staff Sgt. Cato serves as a Section Sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Satellite Control Bn., Schriever AFB, Colo. A native of Texas, Cato has been taking college courses through Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He was selected as the Space and Missile Defense Command NCO of the Year.



Sgt. Jennifer A. Swift, SMDC

Sgt. Swift serves as a Satellite Network Controller with 1st Satellite Control Bn., Schriever AFB, Colo. A native of California, Swift has completed course work through Central Texas College towards an associate's degree in Applied Technology. She was selected as the Space and Missile Defense Command Soldier of the Year.



Sgt. 1st Class John C. Dozer, USASOC

Sgt. 1st Class Dozer serves as a Small Group Leader with the Special Warfare Center and School and the NCO Academy, Fort Bragg, N.C. A native of Florida, Dozer is married with one child and is currently taking courses at Campbell University in pursuit of a degree in Computer Science. He was selected as U.S. Army Special Operations Command NCO of the Year.



Spc. Jason A. Parsons, USASOC

Spc. Parsons serves as a Radio Operator with Co. A, 2nd Bn., 75th Ranger Regiment., Fort Lewis, Wash. A native of Arkansas, Parsons is married and was selected as the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Soldier of the Year.



Staff Sgt. David A. Cooke, USARSO

Staff Sgt. Cooke serves as a Protective Services Agent with Headquarters, U.S. Army South, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A native of Alabama, Cooke is married and has taken courses through Central Texas College. He was selected as the U.S. Army South Soldier of the Year.



Pfc. William A. Ibrahim, Jr., USARSO

Pfc. Ibrahim serves as the Unit Armorer for Co. B, 470th Military Intelligence Group, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A native of Texas, Ibrahim was selected as the U.S. Army South Soldier of the Year.

